

**RISK FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF  
LUNTE DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

**BY**

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## DEDICATION

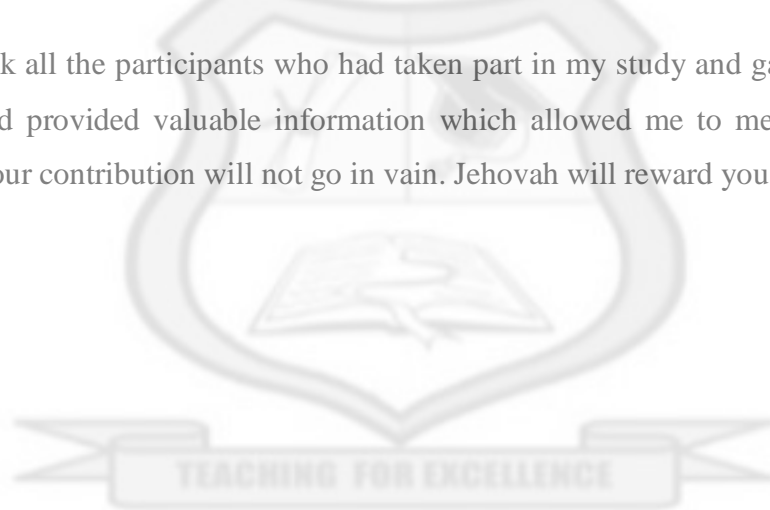
I dedicate this research work to my family, especially my wife, Bwembya Miriam Chola and my daughter, Chola Kangwa Comfort. I also dedicate this work to my father Mr. Chimba Chola Glastone and my mother Mrs. Chanda Margret Chimba, for the financial support they gave me during the study and for making my academic field so effective, may Jehovah's double favour be their portion. Furthermore, this work is dedicated to my late daughter Chola Esther and my late young brother Mubanga Chola, May their souls rest in peace. Last but not the least, my research supervisor, Dr. M. K. Banja for his tireless exertion in ensuring that the fruition point comes this far positively.



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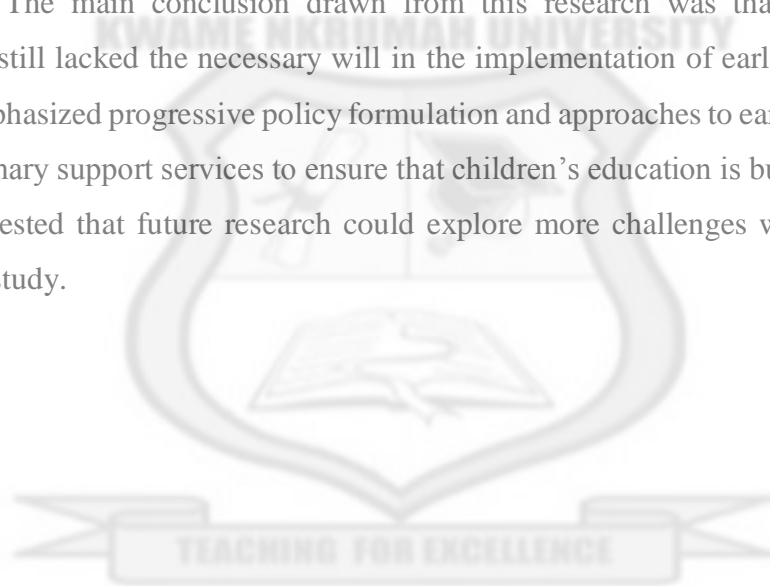
## ACRONYMS

<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education.
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoGE</b>	Ministry of General Education
<b>PIP</b>	Planned Implementation Program
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nation International Children Emergency Fund



## ABSTRACT

This study sought to address the risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood Education in selected primary schools, in Lunte District of Northern province in Zambia. The study used grounded theory design for data collection. The research instruments used were interview guides for twenty-four school staff selected and tests for grade two pupils. The purposive and snowball samplings were used. The findings were analysed qualitatively. The findings were that early childhood education provides the child with a good foundation for future success though the knowledge was not well reviewed in those schools under the study. The findings further showed that the role of early childhood education in selected primary schools in Lunte district had not been to its effect. The main conclusion drawn from this research was that current policies and interventions still lacked the necessary will in the implementation of early childhood education. The study emphasized progressive policy formulation and approaches to early childhood education and other primary support services to ensure that children's education is built at a tender age. The research suggested that future research could explore more challenges which were outside the scope of this study.



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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This chapter presents the context of the study and the justification to undertake it. It begins with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, study objectives and study questions. Furthermore, it sheds light on the significance of the study, theoretical framework, and delimitation of the study sites and provides operational definitions of terms.

### 1.2 Background to the Study

The wellspring of a reliable future generation lies in the education foundation its children attend. The focus of education is the child who has a future in hand to transform the system for the betterment of nations and the world at large. Early childhood education is a branch of education theory which relates to the teaching of young children formally and informally up to the age of six. It emerged as a field of study during the enlightenment, particularly in European countries with high literacy rates (Adentwi, 2002). The formalisation of early childhood Education arrangements emerged in the nineteenth century with the establishment of kindergarten for Educational purposes and day nurseries for care in much of the Europe and North America, Brazil, China, India, Jamaica and Mexico. Early childhood education has a global scope, caring for and educating young children, it has always been an essential part of human society in as far as human evolution and the current regime of educated force managing education systems today. “We cannot always prepare the future for our youths, but we can always prepare the youth for their better future” (Roosevelt, 2019).

Proper guidance and exploration, can enable children begin to become more comfortable with their environment, if they are steady guided. Early childhood education focuses on learning through play. According to Jean Piaget as quoted in (Children’s Defense Fund, 2000), which posits that play meets the physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social needs. Learning through play has been seen regularly in practice as the most important way a child can learn. In a more contemporary approach, organisations such as National Association of the Education of Young Children promote child guided learning experiences, individualised learning and developmentally appropriate learning as tenets of early childhood education. This research was conducted in the

rural primary schools, because of young children who live in poverty lag behind their peers from their earliest school years. Many studies on Early Childhood Education, have suggested that poor children do not enter school adequately prepared for success (Boyd, 2013). However, few early childhood programmes have been well-controlled to allow researchers to evaluate the extent to which long-term outcomes are the result of the program itself specifically in rural areas.

It could be stated that to every appropriate age there is the type of education tailored relevantly to it, and so is the early childhood education. In the years 2013/2014, the government of the republic of Zambia, made public pronouncement to start early childhood education programmes in selected primary schools in rural districts (MoE, 2013). Children's development is not only affected by their personal well-being but also by their ability to contribute to the well-being of society in general.

The strength of any structure depends on the foundation and footing given to it, if the foundation and footing given to the building is not strong, the building cannot stand for a long period of time. If the foundation and footing are perfect, the building will be strong and last long. Poor foundation and footing of a building leads to collapse of such a building. So it is with the early childhood education. Early childhood education is where the education of children is laid. Poor performance in the other levels of academic can be traced from this foundation level.

Background information concerning Early Childhood Education, was discussed in 2004 in Zambia by UNESCO. The Zambian government allocated Early Childhood Education under the Ministry of Education. According to Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2003-2007, ECE would be an integral part of basic education. The Official board in charge of supervision or coordination was the Ministry of Education which assisted early childhood institutions by training pre-school teachers, monitoring standards, and preparing curriculum guidelines. The Ministry also had incorporated ECE into its National Development Plan 2006-2010 as an integral part of basic education especially in the rural areas. The other partners involved in the provision are municipalities, local governments and other types of early childhood providers like public, private, mixed, community-based, faith based and many more. From 2004, the Ministry of Education was expected to provide and coordinate all ECE activities. It must also be pointed out that the desire

for early childhood education forced the Zambia Institute for Special Education, (ZAMISE) in 1993, to introduce a pre-school teacher training course for children with special education needs. This was done so to prepare teachers with the necessary knowledge needed in handling early childhood children who have disabilities so that they are not left out.

When it came to recent national policies and reforms on the existing National Policy of the Ministry of Education focuses on children 3-6 years old. In line with the 2004 GRZ Gazette, the Ministry's concern has been the establishment of early childhood programmes for children living in urban areas. The Ministry resolved to work with partner ministries, district and urban councils, local communities, NGOs, religious groups, families and individuals in order to increase access at this level. MoE (1996:9) states that,

*“The ministry will also continue to dedicate some of its resources to this level of education through the training of early childhood education teachers, cooperation in the monitoring of early childhood standards, assistance in curriculum formation the design of materials and support for the development of policy guidelines”.*

Understanding the importance attached to early childhood education is essential, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in 1990 undertook a joint commitment to make an urgent universal appeal to give every child a better future. In addition, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasised that urgent priority was to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for all children (Gayle & Lee, 2015). The convention on the rights of the child stipulated that children have a right to live and develop to their full capacity. Quality education enables societies to pass on moral, social and cultural values into children from one generation to another. Supporting the development of the child physically and mentally leads to increased enrolment, improved performance and effective contribution to society in general. Effective provision of early childhood facilities offers equal opportunities to children from both the privileged and disadvantaged homes. Early childhood education is a preparatory class for greater academic achievements and future success.

A Zambian study conducted by Carmody (2004) stated that early childhood education, formed part of educational reform in declarative statement. This further came out as early childhood education could not be compulsory but it should be given to as many children as possible. The author further added that for some time to come the government should not provide or run pre-schools. The reason was government avoided the burden and deviated the obligation by assigning voluntary agencies, local authorities, and others to provide early childhood education as desired.

Recent developments in Zambia, in promoting and providing quality Early Childhood Education, the ECE mandate was moved from the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to the Ministry of Education in 2004. Since then, Ministry of General Education, has undertaken various activities to improve delivery of quality ECE and has also been working with various partners and line Ministries. Ministry of General Education recruited and deployed 1,100 ECE teachers between 2013 and 2017. In July 2015, MoGE created and established a new Directorate for ECE. The goal of the directorate was to uphold the right to education for survival, healthy growth, education and holistic development of children under the age of 7 years, including those with special educational needs. The Early Childhood Education Policy Implementation Plan overall outcomes were that at least 50% of children entering Grade 1 have ECE experience by 2021 in order for Grade 1 performance to improve above children with no ECE experience. This went with the upgrading of existing government primary schools. Between 2013 and 2014 1,526 ECE centers were created (MoGE, 2013).

The ECE directorate also involved stakeholders such as UNICEF, Save the Children, Child Fund, and Plan International, Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance and Zambia National Education Coalition in ECE provision. Apart from provision of ECE there was need for enhancing quality provision of the ECE teacher training diploma Curriculum, monitoring mechanisms of ECE infrastructure, regulating minimum qualification for ECE tutors, putting in place a governing body for ECE examinations and certification. Furthermore, regular monitoring of safety and hygiene standards in ECE centres and the establishment of Demo ECE centres in ECE teacher training institutions would be needed.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The Zambian government call for early childhood education implementation in rural districts such as Lunte has been accepted by most well-meaning education practitioners. This was the first time that the government had allowed the running of pre-schools in rural areas. The minister of general education pronounced the implementation of early childhood in Zambia in 2013 (Zambia daily mail, newspaper, 13th February, 2013). Despite the government's effort and call to introduce early childhood education in rural schools, early childhood education has not produced the desired outcomes in Lunte district. The problem identified was poor delivery of early childhood education in selected primary schools of Lunte district. It is for this reason that the researcher aimed to investigate the risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood education.

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood Education in selected primary schools of Lunte district in contrast with the government pronouncement.

### **1.5 Study Objectives**

The study objectives were to:

1. Identify the risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood education in selected primary schools of Lunte District.
2. Explore the benefits of early childhood education implementation in selected primary schools of Lunte District.
3. Establish possible practical measures, of enhancing early childhood education implementation in selected primary schools of Lunte District.

### **1.6 Study Questions**

The study questions were the reflections of the objectives above respectively:

1. What risk factors affected the implementation of early childhood education in selected primary schools of Lunte District?

2. What were the benefits of the implementation of early childhood education in selected primary schools of Lunte District?
3. How could early childhood education be effectively implemented in the selected primary schools in Lunte District?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the research findings on risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood education in Lunte District of Zambia would help educational practitioners, educational administrators, policy makers, curriculum developers, politicians and other stakeholders interested in early childhood education to come up with effective measures of implementing early childhood education in Lunte District. It is further hoped that this study shall serve as a reference, to other areas not researched on similar or not in Zambia. It would also stimulate interest for further inquiries on the topic by other educational researchers.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This research was guided by the theory of cognitive development, which was developed by Jean Piaget (1936). The theory guided or influenced the study that children develop mentally based on the exposure and experiences they have been subjected to in their early stages of life. This implies that the mind of the child is flexible and quicker to learn, so any delay to academic exposure has a negative effect on their later elementary level performance. Furthermore, the theory asserts that a child is a product of the environment, hence subjecting children to early childhood education pays more future dividends. Piaget began researching on the reasons behind incorrect answers children were giving to standardised tests. He then concluded the traditional idea that children were empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, was incorrect. He believed that children are active builders of knowledge and little scientist who construct theories of their own world. Piaget believed that children learn in four stages. These are; sensor motor stage, which is between 0-2 years. At this stage children learn primarily through their senses. The second stage is pre-operational stage which is 2-6 years, where a child learns to use words and symbols like numbers. The concrete stage is between 6-11 years where children understand how to perform mental task like Math. The formal operations stage is between 11-adult. Piaget believed that children learn complex and abstract

reasoning. Early childhood education provides a constructively learning environment, earlier in life stage education of children, so as to provide effective development of a child.

A teacher should serve as a guide, rather than as an instructor. The teacher should encourage children to make mistakes and ask questions to aid learning and growth. Children must learn from their peers, once children learn from their mistakes they develop knowledge about the world through trial and error. This acts as a scaffold in the children's development.

Early childhood education is transitional between learning in the home and learning in the school. In the classroom situation, children socialise freely in an atmosphere which enable them to learn from their friends. This platform provides learning through play hence, children reach distinct stages in development and become capable of logical thoughts. They are able to think and classify several objects in the classroom and think abstractly. They are also able to classify the colours and give hypothesis, hence retaining knowledge. Teachers should take an active mentoring role towards young children instead of pushing information at them while they sit and listen passively.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

The study was conducted in five selected primary schools in Lunte District. Each school was given equal participants to take part in the research so as to give direction to the research outcomes. These schools were: Lubushi, Mpalapata, Mulukuma, Pecha and Lunte primary schools.

### **1.10 Operational Definition of terms used in the study**

<b>Early Childhood Education:</b>	education for children below six years
<b>Efa:</b>	A policy which states that education should be provided to all the people in the country.
<b>Implementation:</b>	putting theory into practice or executing duties according to the plan.
<b>MoGE:</b>	The Zambian government ministry responsible in providing general education to the people.
<b>Pre-School:</b>	it is an educational learning place where young children in the age three to six years old go to

explore their opportunities and to communicate with the world through their intelligence.

**Scaffolding:**

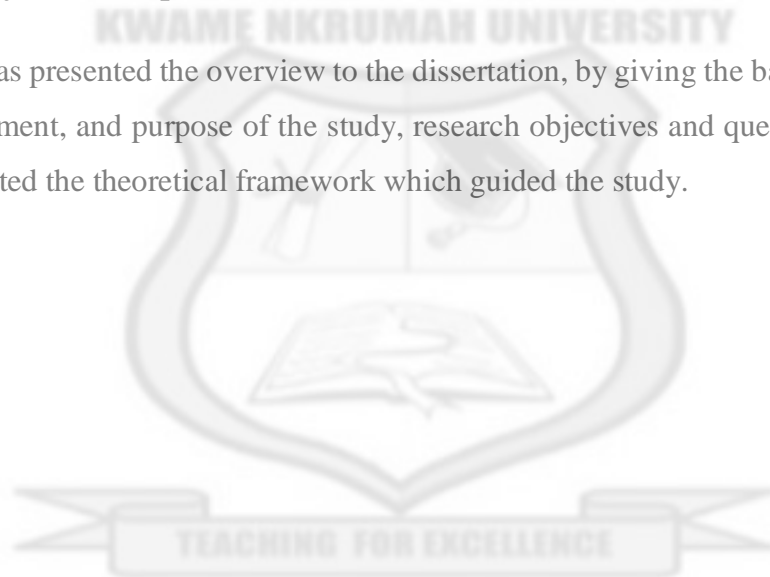
These are concepts and tasks beyond children's capabilities that can be accomplished with help.

**Zamise:**

It is an abbreviation of, Zambia Institute of Special Education, where teachers are trained in responding to the diverse educational needs of children.

**1.11 Summary of the chapter**

The chapter has presented the overview to the dissertation, by giving the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose of the study, research objectives and questions. The chapter has further presented the theoretical framework which guided the study.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Overview

The chapter presents a review of various works/studies are related to the current study. It first presents the literature on the historical overview of early childhood education implementation in Zambia and other countries. Secondly, the literature below is reviewed in line with the objectives set.

### 2.2 Historical Overview

Educational institutions such as primary schools are important agents of socialisation in society. Schools are expected to play an active role in preparing children for socialisation and inculcating knowledge and skills needed by the society for economic development. Zambia can achieve economic development if early childhood is effectively implemented. This is so because early childhood provides the foundation for good performance at Grade one and other levels of education. MoE (1996:7) agrees, “It is believed that early childhood education ushers children from birth to six years into the world of education with much of the learning taking place through play”. Early childhood education is transitional between learning in the home and learning in the school.

According to (Gayle & Lee 2015), “Early Childhood Education, as a distinct form of education, was non-existent prior to the 1800s”. The author further states that it was during the 1800s that people began to think of children as anything more than ‘small adults’ and to recognise that they needed to provide special attention and consideration for them. The concept of Early Childhood Education was brought into focus as the nineteenth century began, by Johann Pestalozzi. Working with young children in Switzerland for thirty years and through his theorising, writing and teaching, Pestalozzi became one of the famous and influential champions of Early Childhood Education in Europe (Nancy, et al, 2011). His first concern was that of care and education of the poor; most of his students were poor. He felt that education was the key to improving lives of the underprivileged and the neglected children in society.

In the Nigerian education system, Chukwbikem (2013) states that, “early childhood education is a starting point for the child’s development and the key foundation the for the Nigerian education

system.” There is need to maintain early childhood education because this is where all education levels are built. Nkechi explained that there is need for good early childhood education to help children to develop their full potentials. Once a child misses the early stages in education, it is usually difficult for the learner to get back to the basic. Hence more emphasis should be given to this form of education. Early childhood education sharpens the child’s cognitive domain through rhythms and songs while playing on the slides and swings helps in physical development and build their muscles.

In the 1990’s Government of Tanzania started to develop and include Early Childhood Education in its National Education Curriculum (Seif, 1991). The purposes of Early Childhood Education Centre were to provide care and supervision for children while their mothers were working in shambas for wages or participating in development activities, teaching cleanliness and good social habits. The need of early child education increased as a result of development of education and other human development activities as well as expansion of primary schools.

### **2.3 (a) Risk factors affecting the implementation of the early childhood.**

There were various factors which affect the implementation of early childhood education according to other studies done before this one.

The infrastructure problem triggers other factors in early childhood education implementation. Facilities available in the schools affect the implementation of ECE. In the Nigerian federal government, their Ministry of education (Gayle & Lee, 2015) gave the guidelines on the early childhood physical facilities, playground, furniture and other miscellaneous items. It stated that there should be the provision of chairs and tables suitable for different ages and sizes. Tables should be made of polished wood or formica surface. Chairs and tables should be of light materials and carry no sharp edges. There should be a large table with drawers for teacher’s use. Provision should be made for book racks and toy storage in every classroom.

Currently this is not the case in the Zambian early childhood education system. Kelly (1996) and MoE (1996) agree that there is a great shortage of desks, few teaching and reading materials, bare classrooms, broken or faded chalkboard. The infrastructure is dilapidated, temporary dark and

unsafe structures with the leaking roofs, broken windows and no doors. This affects the effective implementation of early childhood education.

The study conducted in Kenya by Mbugua (2012) indicated that Kenya had many early childhood teachers who do not have ECE qualifications, the qualifications which teachers had affected their ability to deliver effectively in class. Lack of qualified teachers affected professional conduct of Early Childhood Development programmes. The study also reviewed that parents had negative attitudes towards Early Childhood Development programmes implementation. Furthermore, the study revealed that lack of resources affected teaching and learning processes. The children were vulnerable to deprivation of appropriate experiences because ECD centres were not well equipped.

According to a study conducted in Asia by Barnett (2007), one of the problems affecting pre-schools is the curriculum. A curriculum is the driving force in which any education programme can successfully be implemented. The ECE curriculum is an important written plan that includes goals for children's development and learning experiences through which they achieve the goals, what staff and parents do to help children achieve the goals and the materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum. Early Childhood Curriculum: Curriculum is what and how of any educational enterprise. It is the vehicle through which any educational programmes can be successfully implemented. The ECE curriculum is an important written plan that includes goals for children's development and learning, experiences through which they will achieve the goals, what staff and parents do to help children achieve the goals and, the materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum. The study reviewed that the ECE curriculum in Asia is poorly implemented. National Centre on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL), (2012). The early childhood curriculum helps to ensure that staff or teachers cover important learning areas, adopt a common pedagogical approach and reach for a certain level of quality across age groups.

These descriptions about ECE curriculum indicates that it is an indispensable material in the business of implementing ECE programme. Its indispensability spurred the government of Nigeria to see to the development and production of National Early Childhood Curriculum for Ages 0-5years by NERDC, with the support of UNICEF. This curriculum was launched in 2007. The unfortunate thing however is that this curriculum, since it was launched, is not found in almost all pre-primary schools in Nigeria

Another study done in Kenya by Mligo (2012) reviewed that, Child development is a gradual unfolding of biologically determined characteristics and traits that arises as the child learns from experiences. In developing countries, more than 200 million children under five years fail to reach their potential in cognitive and social development due to poverty, poor health, nutrition, and deficit care. Early childhood children are exposed to multiple risks including poverty, malnutrition, poor health and un-stimulating home environment, which detrimentally affecting their development. Health associated to poverty, nutrition and social factors hinders from attaining to their full developmental potential.

In Brazil Lynne (2012) conducted a study and reviewed that, more than 200 million children under five years fail to reach their potential in cognitive and social development due to poverty, poor health, malnutrition, and deficit care. The prevalence rate of cognitive development problem in Bhutan is 15%, 33.5% of children less than five years are stunted and 9.9% of infants are born with low weight of less than 2,500 grams. Five main factors identified in contributing to growth and developments at early childhood are nutrition, parent's behaviors, parenting, social and cultural practices, and environment. Understanding the extent and magnitude of these problems especially within 1000 days of child includes from the date of conception till the child attends 2 years of age is very important. If timely interventions are taken within this critical period, the problems are reversible and will gain maximum benefits.

When resources are available for ECE programmes at pre-school level, it helps the teacher to nurture and support the development of young children, and to successfully implement the curriculum. According Chukwbikem (2013), "the quantity and quality of resources available for any educational programme would determine schools' systems capacity for the implementation of the type of the programme." Resources like finances, materials and human resource are essential for the successful implementation of early childhood education programmes.

Professional development is another factor affecting the ECE implementation. The teacher holds the key to successful implementation of any educational programme. Lack of professional development has affected the ECE implementation. Some school managers do not have adequate in-service teacher training in pre-school education. Mwanza in Banja (2013) argues that:

“Ineffective management practices can be tied directly to teacher disaffection, lack of commitment and low morale. Effectiveness in schools is by and large, a result of effective leadership. Trained school managers will be able to display positive management practices, which will have a positive effect to the work environment and aid the goal of the Ministry of Education with regard to early childhood education to enable every pupil become a well-educated person who is useful to society and is adequately prepared for the furtherance of his or her education for becoming a self-supporting worker. A dedicated teaching force with adequate in-service knowledge is needed.”

This can be done by motivating teachers by providing them with trained school managers who are able to offer help and pedagogical support to them. This is why the pre-school teachers should be given constant professional development. The professional development is particularly needed by all the teachers in the ECE programme.

According to the study, the type of in-service training pre-school teachers receive is not from the field of early childhood education. Rod, et al, (2013) revealed that pre-school teachers had problems in implementing the early childhood education curriculum due to the fact that parents believe in early childhood education as a playing ground for the children not as a learning setting. This attitude of parents resulted in poor relationship between the school and home collaboration. Parents are not fully involved in the pre-school provision. They are not willing to help their children in reading, homework and payments. According to a study conducted in America by Reid, Stoolmiller and Webster- Stratoon (2008), “teaching experience of pre-school teachers can also be problematic in implementing the early childhood education curriculum practically (Gayle & Lee, 2015)”

In the review conference on challenges in ECE Provision in Zambia, it was said that the factors affecting ECE implementation are inadequate inclusive and responsive parenting programmes, inadequate teacher recruitment, qualified teachers not willing to serve in hard to reach and remote areas. Furthermore, some lecturers in teacher training colleges lacked orientation in ECE principles and methodologies. Another challenge was that some ECE teachers trained in different pedagogies, and that there was inadequate funding to the ECE sub-subsector.

The Challenges in Implementing Early Childhood Education in Nigeria Professionally Qualified Caregivers/Teachers: It is widely acknowledged that early childhood educators with required professional preparation provide more developmentally appropriate, nurturing, and responsive care and education experiences for young children (National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 2007). This aligns with the submission in an Issue Brief by National Governors Association Centre for Best Practices (2010) that the knowledge and skills of early childhood care providers and teachers are critical factors in their delivery of high-quality developmental and educational experiences to young children. In confirmation of this, Boyd (2013) reported the result of a study conducted in 2002 by National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD) and The Early Child Care Research Network (ECCRN) in which it was found that providers with BA degrees in ECE provided higher quality learning experiences for children in their care.

According to Chukwbikem (2013), the quantity and quality of resources available for Professional Development are risk factors in the implementation of ECE. The teacher holds the key to successful implementation of any educational enterprise. Early childhood professional development brings to the forefront the significance of the early years for children's learning and development and highlights the central role early childhood educators play in children's successful outcomes. Unfortunately, ECE teachers in Nigeria do not receive professional development training. Researchers have confirmed that the teachers lack professional development training. This lack of professional training for the teachers is liable to worsen the problems of implementing ECE in Nigeria. This is because almost all the teachers in Nigerian pre-primary schools are not professionally qualified.

Inspection and Supervision is done to ensure effective implementation of any educational enterprise, supervision must be given adequate attention. In regards to ECE, Awino (2014) noted that it is important to inspect and supervise in order to gather information from children, caregivers, parents, communities, and general ECE environment. Supervision of ECE can be used to correct errors, modify practices where necessary and motivate as well as encourage all involved in its implementation. Usually, the changes that result from supervision of ECE programme can strengthen the implementation of such ECE programme. Supervision in ECE leads to the holistic development of children, enables efficient implementation of curriculum, checks whether the

objectives of the programmes have been achieved, promotes maintenance of basic standards, identifies problems and constraints, motivates, enriches and promote personal as well as professional growth all those involved (Awino, 2014). Despite the immense benefits that supervision has to offer the ECE, the Nigerian ECE at pre-primary school level is not provided with these benefits as it is usually left unsupervised. This cannot allow effective implementation of ECE programmes at pre-primary school level in Nigeria. Researchers have consistently lamented this lack of supervision in ECE.

In the examination review and analysis of Early Childhood Education issues and challenges in the Nigerian education system since independence, Eriba (2011) explained it was a system faced with crisis. They inherited the system from colonial masters. Judged against this premise, it becomes very challenging for Nigerians to manage the educational system passed to them by the British. Early childhood education in Nigeria is not left out in these crises which tend to make the gains of education less important. These challenges are: teacher-pupil Ratio syndrome, poor funding of early childhood education programmes. If education is poorly funded, it affects the staffing, pupil teacher ratio, the provision of infrastructure and many more, which would have a grave effect on what is likely to be the quality of the output (Browne, et al, 2009).

In addition, (Nancy, et al, 2011) argue that “cost-reduction strategies may be needed in order to reduce the financial burden on government, for example, by encouraging community participation and integration. Evidence shows, however, that poor, rural people are not always able to provide a substantial number of resources, nor can they meet the direct or the indirect costs of education.” Countries suffering from severe recession or in regions where incomes are generally low, many children have been unable to attend school when parents have been expected to pay for pre-school and primary education.

Monitoring and supervision is another challenge in the implementation of early childhood education. The ECE lack trained inspector who have the knowledge of early childhood education. No educational plan however excellent it may be can effectively be implemented if the school inspection and supervision is ineffective. Mwanakatwe (2013) states that; “the efficiency of the teaching force depends upon the quality of the inspectorate. Supervision needs to be conducted so as to provide constructive criticism and guidance and develop a sense of confidence and competence in teachers, thereby leading to improvement.”

The study conducted in India by Kulbir (1996) revealed that inspection and supervision are key figures in any reform of classroom practice because they provide professional leadership to educational workers so as to improve their work and give them correct direction to promote growth of all teachers by providing them guidance in the field and in-service now and then. This also helps to clarify education goals.

The official provision made in the National Policy on Education mandated the Zambian government to encourage private efforts in the provision of early childhood education in the country (Chukwbikem, 2013). More so, owing to the high demand for early childhood education by parents, it does not take a long time for newly established early childhood institutions to grow and develop. Poor quality ECE services and poor qualification of early childhood teachers affected the provision of pre-school.

In the Kenyan early childhood institutions today, teacher quality is generally low. There is negligence on the part of government. This, in addition to lack of supervision to ensure the maintenance of standards, led to increase in the numbers of early childhood education institutions in the country which have poor ECE services (Gayle & Lee, 2015).

Research on the employment behaviour of parents in relation to ECE has concentrated on the role of mothers as women are still the primary caregivers in many families (Kimmel, 1998). It is therefore, expected that the conditions under which ECE is managed has an impact on the labour market participation of women. Mothers are likely to reduce working time, work part-time instead of full-time or drop out of the labour market, particularly when their children are still young, if ECE provision is unavailable or expensive (Meulders et al., 2009).

Other work, such as that by Blau (2001) maintains that labour force participation goes up as ECE costs decline and that this effect holds especially for single mothers and mothers with low incomes. Regardless of which group sees the biggest effect, these results present an argument in favour of childcare subsidies, to push down the cost. Studies done in Netherlands have found smaller effects (Jongen 2010) for women's labour market participation.

A more recent analysis in Netherlands by Akgündüz and Plantenga (2011) arrives at the following result: there is a consensus that there is a negative relationship between the cost of ECE and labour market participation: the size of the relationship depends on the country's labour force

participation rate, part-time work and social spending. In the most recent edition of the ECE's starting strong series, further data on the relationship between ECE enrolment rates in formal childcare and the labor market participation of mothers are presented. The numbers confirm a positive impact of ECE on the labor market participation of mothers, especially for those whose youngest child is less than 3 years old. In some countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, both enrolment rates and labor force participation are high. In other countries, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the opposite results were found. In 2014, on average across the ECD, 35 percent (35%) of women with a child younger than 3 was employed. This number increases to 65 to say percent (65%) for those with children aged 3 to 5. However, besides considering the cost of ECE, the quality needs to be ensured as well in order to encourage trust and confidence in the system (OECD, 2017). Karoly et al. (2005) similarly report that the stability and quality of ECE can influence labour market participation and performance. Karoly and Bigelow (2005) also find evidence of these effects in America.

A study conducted in Belgium by Daniel Meulders and Sile O'Dorchi (2009) differentiated between mothers and fathers when describing labour market effects related to ECE. Although there is substantial variation, these authors find that employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers are typically larger than those between fathers and non-fathers. Moreover, there is a wage gap between mothers and non-mothers. Young children are even more likely than other age groups to live in poverty and being poor. Children growing up in low-income households face increased risks of: hunger, academic failure, teen pregnancy, poor health, dropping out and exposure to violence and crime.

Poor funding in the education sector was another challenge in the implementation of the ECE programmes. No educational policy or programme however excellent, can be effectively implemented with poor funding. This implies that poor funding has a negative effect on the effective implementation of any successful programme. In the Zambian education system, the early childhood education sector has experienced a decline in funding. Kelly (1996) states that the education sector in Zambia has experienced a continuing decline in public funding for education and training. Pre-school, primary and secondary education suffered particularly during the recession and economic restructuring.

The first days in the development of a child are considered most important development phase. Early healthy child development includes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive domains of development. What happens to the child in these early days has immense impact on child's development at latter part of the year. Factors such as nutrition, parenting, parent behavior, environmental, and social and culture are the risk factors in the implementation of early childhood Education. Inadequate intake of good nutrition and mother's poor nutritional status during pregnancy.

Long distances and geographical location of early childhood education centres affect the implementation of early childhood education. Rural and remote parents cannot manage to send pre-school children to school, because of long distances. In some areas, people are too scattered for all to be in walking distance of a school. Swollen rivers and hazardous routes make it so difficult to attend school. The ministry of education in Banja (2013:44) states that, "In Zambia most of the rural and remote schools do not have electricity, suitable buildings, safe drinking water, and satisfactory living conditions, including accommodation for teachers. Many rural schools are several kilometers away from the main road and markets."

#### **2.4 Benefits in the implementation of early childhood education**

The two larger studies, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development study and an impact study of Head Start programs, looked at a much broader range of programmes. A few key findings emerge across the studies: High quality ECE programmes make substantial contributions to the lives of young children and yield high returns to society's investment in them (Browne, 2009). When more is spent on early childhood education, the returns to society are higher. Quality early childhood education programme is important in improving the lives of children. The success and accomplishment of future goals of children is straightened by quality ECE programmes, the larger environment and the quality schools that children attend after their early childhood experiences. Early childhood education programmes can be a good place to start improving the lives of children but they are only one part of a larger effort. Quality early childhood education significantly improves the cognitive and social behavioral capacities of young children so that later in life they will be more productive citizens than they would otherwise have been (Botta, 2009). As more productive citizens, their direct economic contribution would be enhanced.

They would place less financial burden on society, having less need for remedial educational services, better health outcomes, less need for welfare support, and a reduced engagement with the criminal justice system.

These studies were of model programmes, that is, programmes which are “typically funded at higher levels and run by more highly trained staff than large-scale publically-funded programmes (Bogenschneider, 2000). On the applicable target, each of these studies of model programmes found positive effects of the programmes on measures of educational success. For instance, in a 2001 review of these studies, Janet Currie provides this summary of the studies of two widely known programs; the Abecedarian Project and the Perry Pre-school Project, both of which have served children from low-income families (Browne, 2009). The Abecedarian study found that high-quality multi-faceted early intervention does indeed alter the course of intellectual development in young children. Positive effects resulting from the project included: Higher learning performance, and improved language development. Young adults who received intervention had significantly higher cognitive test scores from toddlerhood through age 21 than did untreated peers.

In situations where high quality care cannot be provided because of lack of funds or lack of sufficiently trained staffs, adequate care can still be important in supporting the child care needs of families (Awino, 2014). The most valuable lesson advocates for pre-school education can take away from the early intervention studies is not to oversell the potential benefits (Bogenschneider, 2000). Additionally, there is decreased Grade retention and decreased need for special education. Twelve percent of those in early intervention were placed in special education by age 15, compared with 48 percent in the control group (Botta, 2009). The gains are in higher reading and math achievement scores. The size of the effect on math scores was medium in contrast to the large effect on reading. The project had no effects on maternal attachment to children; parental childrearing attitudes; or the family’s home environment (Barnett, 1995). These findings are actually conservative estimates because the program was carried out in a high-resource community with lots of other services.

When this study was replicated in the Infant Health Development Project, researchers found that African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian children who were at highest risk benefitted the most from early intervention (Awino, 2014). On a contentious view in line to this research demography,

the study also found that benefits continue when children are in high-resource school environments, but diminish if children move to low-resource schools. Early childhood was for timing and duration of the programme that affect child outcomes positively.

There lie many principles as to why early childhood education was developed on the benefits. On the principle of developmental timing, programs that begin before the age of 3 and continue until school age have shown the greatest benefits. The earlier a child enters in school the more likely that the benefits would be sizable. Children who receive direct educational experience have larger and longer-term benefits than do children in programs relying on intermediary routes, such as parent training (Botta, 2009).

It is clear that the potential benefits of high-quality early childhood education and care are considerable, far-reaching and long-lasting, which explains why academicians and policy-makers have advocated for investing in early childhood education. Investment should be considered carefully as research has emphasised the need for accessible, affordable and high-quality ECE. Indeed, the beneficial impact of ECE is not to be taken for granted, but depends greatly on the quality of provision. Moreover, the challenge lies in ensuring that all children have equal access to high quality early childhood provision, avoiding social stratification in access and tackling inequalities (Penn, 2007; 2009; 2011; Lloyd, 2008).

The importance of children's environments in order to maintain development in children's education lies in the early childhood education. The effects of early intervention diminish if no adequate environmental supports are in place to maintain the child's positive attitudes, behavior and to encourage continued learning. The principle of cultural appropriateness demands that education should be provided in the local context where children are coming from in order to benefit and sustain their local demands. Families must recognise and build on cultural beliefs, traditions and practices in order to achieve desired outcomes (Awino, 2014). The author further stated that children are less likely to achieve long-term success if they do not build upon cultural values and strengths. Quality early childhood education for children in poverty areas is an effective community investment. Early childhood development and school readiness programs boost academic achievement and social competence for children attending quality elementary and secondary schools (Botta, 2009).

Welfare reform means that, more than ever, children growing up in low-income families will need early child care. With the available tangible evidence, there is no doubt that the provision of early learning experiences can increase their chances for later success. The economic benefits of education have been subject to research for many years. From the beginning, the relationship between education and human capital, and their respective ties to economic performance and growth has received much attention. Growth and productivity are closely tied to competitiveness, which in turn is linked to education too (Karoly et al., 2005). Economic benefits at the society level can be understood as the monetary benefits associated with investing in education or in other words, they represent the financial returns from investing in ECE.

Early work on human capital emphasises this link: in many countries, the quality and quantity of education and training have raised concerns over the past decades in relation to the poor performance in productivity growth and competition faced by other players in the market (Becker, 1994, Karoly et al. 2005). To stresses the effect on competitiveness, fueled by technological change and globalisation, the demand for skilled labour has increased over the past decades. By investing in ECE, and through its impact on education and labour markets, countries can remain competitive in a globalised world.

The non-monetary benefits linked to early childhood education and care, have been widely assessed. In fact, the initial debate on the importance of investing in ECE was largely driven by non-economic arguments relating to child development. Since the early 2000 ECE has been encouraged for economic reasons. These benefits are not only to the individuals but also extend to the society at large.

The first major longitudinal studies in Europe were probably conducted in Sweden, first by Andersson (1992). In his work, a group of 128 children were studied, ranging from 16 months to 13 years old. The study concluded that childcare early enrolment in school was associated with better scores on cognitive tests at age 13. Age of entry was a significant predictor of cognitive results even when controlled for family characteristics like family type, family socio-economic status and the mother's education level. The authors attributed the positive effects to the high quality Swedish early childhood education system including well-trained staff.

The Anderson study was soon followed by that of Broberg et al. (1997), tracking 146 children up to age of 8 and comparing children who attended Centre-based care with children who attended

family-based care or no care. They confirmed that an early start matters as the number of months in childcare was positively associated with cognitive outcomes.

In Northern Ireland, Melhuish et al. (2006) looked longitudinally at a sample of 800 children, recruited at age 3 and studied at ages 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. He concluded that early childhood education enhances cognitive development, social development and behavioral competences. Higher-quality early childhood education is associated with better intellectual outcomes and in turn high quality education is a product of high-quality staff, professional development, strong leadership and a strong shared curriculum.

The 1975 childcare reform in Norway was used to study the impact of childcare availability on children's educational attainment by Havens and Mogstad (2011). Three cohorts, before, during and after the reform were compared at age 30 to 33. The study concluded that early childhood education attendance was significantly associated with educational attainment in the long term. The oldest longitudinal studies on early childhood education and care include the High Scope Perry Pre-school Project (1962), the Abecedarian Project (1972) and the Chicago Pre-school project (1985). An individual becomes more productive and experiences benefits in the short and long run as a result of early childhood education. Benefits are not limited to the individual alone, but also extend to society at large. The benefits of investing in human capital have been widely documented. Becker (1994), established that in the US, high school and college education increase an individual's income even when the direct and indirect costs of schooling, family background and abilities are taken into account. This result not only holds for the US but has been also documented for numerous countries in different parts of the world.

Notwithstanding the multitude of potential policies, there is a growing understanding and evidence base suggesting that early childhood education and care play a fundamental role in building human capital (Heckman, 2006; Esping-Andersen, 2008). Recent research has suggested that investing in early childhood education and care is the most efficient form of government spending to increase human capital (Chevalier et al., 2006). For the case of the US, Heckman (2006) maintains that the economic return on investment per child in ECE is higher than the return on investment attained in any other period.

Heckman (2006) argues that the return on investment in the early years exceeds that of investment later in life because the development of a skill builds on skills acquired previously. Skills which

are developed are essential for further learning such as perseverance and self-control. Such skills are important on their own as well as in supporting later education. In other words, certain developmental stages need to be reached in early childhood, and the competences acquired are necessary foundations for later success regardless of whether they are acquired. From an early age, both cognitive and non-cognitive abilities need to be developed to lay the foundation for future development. Or, as Heckman (2006) states, “a large body of research in social science, psychology and neuroscience shows that skill begets skill; that learning begets learning”. Against this background, (Rod, et al, 2013) maintain that there is under-investment in the young, especially in disadvantaged populations in the US. Also in Europe, disadvantaged children in particular remain underrepresented in ECE (European Commission, 2016).

Kilburn and Karoly (2008, p. 5) confirm that “human capital theory suggests that investments in individuals’ productive capacities have the potential to improve individual outcomes and that these investments might produce the greatest payoffs when made early in individuals’ lives”. Similarly, Felfe and Lalive (2011) conducted a longitudinal study on a national dataset of former East and West Germany, looking at data from 800 children, studied from ages 2 to 10. Similar to the Northern Irish study, Felfe and Lalive found that children who attended ECE centres achieved significantly higher scores on all cognitive and non-cognitive indicators. Children from a lower socio-economic status benefitted more when accessibility to ECE centers was improved. A few years earlier, Spie et al. (2003) analysed data from the German Socio-Economic Panel to look at effects of ECE use in West Germany. They analysed the school careers of a sample of 110 migrant children and 206 German children. The main finding was that kindergarten attendance significantly raised the probability of immigrant children being placed in a school with a higher educational level. This was not the case for German-born children, after controlling for socio-economic status. Becker and Tremel (2006) reported similar results in their study using data from the same panel.

Ruth Wilson (2018) looked at the impact of ECE on migrant children with Albanian, Turkish, Portuguese, Italian as well as Swiss backgrounds using questionnaires for teachers. The main findings of these studies indicated that children who attended ECE were significantly better assessed by their kindergarten and primary school teachers in the first class in terms of their linguistic, cognitive and special skills than children who grew up exclusively in the circle of their

own family; in particular, it emerged that children from migrant families managed the transition to school significantly better.

Despite this wealth of evidence, not all studies find strong correlations between ECE and children's outcomes. A cohort study in the Netherlands by Driessen (2004) collected data in kindergarten and at grade 2 and grade 4, and compared these with a sample of children who did not take up ECE. Driessen (2004) found only weak correlations that disappeared when controlling for family characteristics. In Denmark, Datta Gupta and Simonson (2007) conducted a pseudo-experimental cohort study through a statistical estimation on a large-scale dataset, the Danish Longitudinal Survey of Children of 6,000 children. The focus was on non-cognitive outcomes as previous studies had suggested that children in childcare more frequently presented behavioral problems. The study concluded that day care had no significant non-cognitive effects at age 7, except when taken up for more than 40 to 50 hours per week.

Also, a French study by Caille (2001) compared the school careers of children who had attended kindergarten at age 2 with those who had entered at age 3. The positive effect of an early entry did not persist when controlled for family characteristics, meaning that it was family background rather than early entry in ECE that explained the differences in school career.

The principle of the importance of children's environments in order to maintain development in children's education lies in this program. Over time, the effects of early intervention diminish if no adequate environmental supports are in place to maintain the child's positive attitudes and behavior and to encourage continued learning.

Early childhood education and care contributes to social inclusion and social cohesion in several ways. One example relates to the social support function, which has been described in more detail in the previous section. As ECE ensures social support through bonding and bridging, it brings together children and parents of different backgrounds in a familiar environment. It has been demonstrated that having young children is a matter that can connect people from diverse origins and socio-economic statuses (Geens and Vandebroek, 2013). In a context of increased diversity, or even super-diversity, ECE can contribute to social cohesion and social inclusion through this channel. In most European cities, there is no majority. In Brussels, Europe's capital, for example, the number of frequently spoken languages has risen to 104 and 50% of families in Brussels are multilingual (Janssens, 2016). Against this background, academics and policy-makers have

pointed to the role of the educational system in general, and to ECE in particular, on supporting social inclusion and cohesion (OECD, 2006; European Commission, 2015). Meeting places for parents and young children have mushroomed worldwide over the last few decades, for example, in countries like England and Australia (Needham and Jackson, 2012), and in Belgium, France, Italy and Japan (Musatti et al., 2016).

Clearly, there can be long-term benefits from quality early childhood education. In fact, according to one researcher, for many children, pre-school programs can mean the difference between failing and passing, regular or special education, staying out of trouble or becoming involved in crime and delinquency, dropping out or graduating from high school (Rod, et al, 2013). Children from impoverished environments tend to reap the most dramatic benefits from early childhood programs. Early childhood education can increase parents' and teacher's expectations of children's performance. Children growing up in poverty or near poverty face many health and environmental risks. In particular, they need to get off to a good start in life. One way to help these children is to place them in quality early education programmes.

In line with beneficial impacts on development and behaviour, there is enough evidence that participation in early childhood education and care can lead to improvements in individuals' health and well-being, which in turn are reflected in lower health-related costs. The study by Karoly et al. (2005) summarises effects documented in the literature that are related to pregnancy and childbearing, accidents and injuries, child maltreatment, smoking and other factors. The study found that participation in ECE eliminates chances of teen childbearing as well as the number of babies with a low weight at birth. Moreover, child maltreatment would be reduced as a consequence of better-educated parents. Reynolds et al. (2011), comparing children who participated in the early childhood education and care programme with those who did not propensity score matching techniques, find that health insurance coverage rates for the former are significantly higher than for the latter (75.9% versus 63.9%) (Mitchell et al, (2008).

Early childhood education prepares children to develop their social, physical, mental, spiritual and emotional capacity which enables children to become effective citizens of a nation. *Educating our Future* (1996) states that early childhood education prepares children to adapt to the more formal learning atmosphere of the basic school. This implies that children enter into primary school well prepared for future success. Early childhood education has a lot of benefits in the life of children

and the nation at large. Hence there is need to implement early childhood education effectively so that the nation can have a highly skilled workforce and higher community retains. ECE Improves social skills Children learn to engage better with other children and adults. The preschool environment allows children to acquire vital skills that allow them to listen to others and express their own ideas, make friends, share, cooperate, and become accountable for their actions. ECE enables pupils to achieve better performance in other school grades. Children who receive early education are known to have a reduced need for special education instruction in elementary school and beyond. Quality preschool programmes help to build a strong foundation for the child's physical, mental, emotional, and social development that prepare them for a lifetime. ECE Improves attention spans in children. Children are inclined to be curious and interested in discovering new things. Quality early childhood programs maximize opportunities for the discovery of new experiences, new environments, and new friends, while maintaining a balance with the ability to listen, participate in group tasks, follow directions, and work independently, all of which develop the vital life skill of concentration and enthusiasm for lifelong learning: Children who receive quality early childhood education are reportedly more confident and curious, which causes them to perform better in grade school. Children learn how to manage challenges and build resilience in times of difficulty; settle easily at school to reap the benefits of education faster; and acquire a long-term interest in learning different things, including playing music, dancing, singing, construction, cooking, Moreover, studies have shown that early childhood education preschool programs increase the likelihood of children graduating from high school with fewer behavioural issues, attending college, and becoming responsible young adult.

## **2.5 Best possible means of implementing early childhood Education.**

Educating our Future (1996) states that, "Ministry of General Education acknowledges the importance of early childhood education in the multi-dimension development of young children." In order to implement ECE effectively, the government has developed strategic measures. The national policy-makers in education have planned strategies on early childhood education and care such as expanding the provision of pre-schools towards universal access, raising the quality of ECE provision, promoting coherence and coordination of policy and services, explore strategies to ensure adequate investment in ECE, improve staff training and working conditions, developing

pedagogical frameworks appropriate for young children and engage parents, families and communities. Since then, much progress has been made with regard to early childhood education.

The need to undergo professional development training from time to time by the ECE teachers is essential. Professional development training re-trains teachers in educational process as to help teachers to understand the contents of the curriculum properly. Kulbir (1996:132) states that, “A teacher must possess sufficient higher knowledge and qualification as compared to the level of the class which he/she has to teach; he is required to be sufficient and a head of them.”

Professional development is another possible means of ECE implementation. The teacher holds the key to successful implementation of any educational programme. Lack of professional development has affected the ECE implementation. Some school managers do not have adequate in-service teacher training in pre-school education. Mwanza in Banja (2013) argues that:

“Ineffective management practices can be tied directly to teacher disaffection, lack of commitment and low morale. Effectiveness in schools is by and large, a result of effective leadership. Trained school managers will be able to display positive management practices, which will have a positive effect to the work environment and aid the goal of the Ministry of Education with regard to early childhood education to enable every pupil become a well-educated person who is useful to society and is adequately prepared for the furtherance of his or her education for becoming a self-supporting worker. A dedicated teaching force with adequate in-service knowledge is needed.”

This implies that early childhood education teachers should be motivated at all times. The ministry of general education provide schools with trained school managers who are able to offer help and pedagogical support to teachers. This is why the pre-school managers should be given constant professional development. The professional development is particularly needed by all the teachers in the ECE programme.

In relation to funding, the stakeholders need to be effectively involved. All the stakeholders need to develop means of making funds available for ECE so that early childhood education can be implemented effectively. MoE (1996) states that, “the ministry will also continue to dedicate some of its resources to this level of education through the training of pre-school teachers, cooperation

in the monitoring of the pre-school standards, assistance in curriculum formation and the design of materials and support for the development of the policy guidelines”.

In regard to supervision, all the stakeholders need to be involved since they are working towards specific goals of ECE. However, there is need to give appropriate orientation on how standard officers can carry out effective supervision of ECE programmes in their specific areas. A study in Nigeria by Barnett, (1995) states that,

“Evidence has shown lack of relevant resources for ECE at pre-primary school level also is not a problem that does not have a solution. There is need to involve all the partners that are networking to provide ECE for the Nigerian child.”

If all the stakeholders can work in collaboration towards providing resources for ECE at pre-primary school level, the issue of lack of resources will become a history. Likewise, there is a way out of the challenge of not having the ECE curriculum in pre-primary schools. In the Nigerian education system, the government produced and launched the National Early Childhood Curriculum for Ages 0-6 years in 2007 with hope that copies would be available to pre-primary schools in order to provide uniform ECE programme for all Nigerian children. One study revealed that the plan of the government did not change but could have been improperly executed by those saddled with the responsibility of disseminating the curriculum to schools (Awino, 2014). To improve early childhood sector, the government introduced the system of using the internet so that ECE teachers and school managers could have access to the curriculum. Awino comments that it was made mandatory for all pre-primary schools, both public and private, to ensure that the curriculum is available and used in the schools.

The challenge of teacher pupil ratio can also be tackled. It should be realised that the federal government had given mandate to some colleges of education to run pre-service training for those interested in specialising in the field of ECE. Some of these colleges have already produced one or two sets of graduates and there are universities such as University of Ibadan, which have been producing graduate in pre-primary education for over two decades.

The study conducted in Kenya by Mbugua (2012) indicated that, early childhood education in Kenya serves the critical purpose of preparing young children for primary education. Notwithstanding the associated benefits for society as a whole, the government of Kenya is

involved minimally. Indeed, parents are responsible for planning, developing and managing different early childhood programs. Consequently, problems such as funding and lack of program consistency are common. Because early childhood programs are essential, the government should be involved actively in the development and implementation process. The research also reviewed that the Government should develop programmes that view ECE as an important strategy for larger issues such as inclusion and poverty. Governments need to tackle inequalities in access to early childhood care, especially if it is based on income or parental education e.g. educated mothers have better access to antenatal care.

MoE (1996) stated that the government shall dedicate some of its resources to early childhood education. In order effectively implement early childhood education, the Zambian government should effectively fund the ECE sector. No educational policy or programme however excellent, can be effectively implemented with poor funding. This implies that poor funding has a negative effect on the effective implementation of any successful programme. In the Zambian education system, the early childhood education sector need to be fully funded.

The Zambian government should provide physical facilities, playground, furniture and other miscellaneous items that support ECE implementation. In all the ECE schools, there should be the provision of chairs and tables suitable for different ages and sizes. Tables should be made of polished wood or formica surface. Chairs and tables should be of light materials and carry no sharp edges. There should be a large table with drawers for teacher's use. Provision should be made for book racks and toy storage in every classroom.

Teachers play an important role in the implementation of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE). Nevertheless, in Mathira Sub-County in Kenya a concern was raised by various reports that the area still lacks an elaborate framework that can make ECDE operate well. Moreover most ECDE centres do not meet the National ECDE service standard guidelines yet teacher related factors contributing to this phenomenon have not been established. The purpose of the study was thus to find out influence of teacher based factors (qualifications, attitude and learning environment teachers provided to learners) on curriculum implementation in public ECDE Centres in Mathira East Sub County. The study was guided by the curriculum implementation theory by Gross (1971) and adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population comprised all the 41 ECDE Centres in Mathira East Sub County, 41 head teachers and 62 ECDE teachers. Simple

random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 21 (50%) of public pre-schools and teachers (one from each of the sampled schools) while the 21 head teachers were purposively. Data was collected using an observation checklist and questionnaires for head teachers and teachers. Before the actual data collection, the instruments were piloted in 4 ECDE Centres. Validity of the research instruments was ascertained by ensuring that the questionnaire items conformed to the study objectives, while split half technique was used to find out the reliability of the research instruments and a correlation coefficient computed using spearman rank correlation at a 0.8 coefficient. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics namely mean, frequencies and percentages after which the findings were presented using tables, bar-graphs and pie-charts. The study established that, the curriculum instruction in ECDE Centres in Mathira East Sub-County was largely compliant with the recommendations of Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). Findings also showed that majority of pre-school teachers did not prepare professional documents. However, majority of the respondents kept updated pupils health records. The study recommended that the school stakeholders such as school administration, government and parents should examine the various ways of ensuring adequate availability of appropriate teaching and learning materials. More essentially, the government through the ministry of education should come up with programs and policies of providing adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials in ECDE centers. It is further recommended that that all stakeholders should be involved in implementation of ECD programmes. These include government, local councils, traditional leaders, and political leaders, private Sector as well as parents.

## **2.6 Knowledge Gap**

Like in any research, the purpose was to fill the knowledge gap identified. This study was motivated by the observation that not much had been done by the government and local authorities to effectively implement early childhood education in Lunte District as was pronounced by the Ministry of General Education in 2013. Specifically, what was not known were the risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood education in the selected primary schools of Lunte District?

## **2.7 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter presented reviewed literature related to the risk factors that affected the implementation of early child education cited from various countries and continents by scholars. The literature was reviewed in line with the three objectives set in this study that was conducted in the five selected primary school of Lunte District. The purpose of doing this chapter was to set references to current study with what has been done before in order to get some insight and narrowed scope of the study.



## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the research methods and procedures that were used to conduct this study. The chapter consists of research design, study population, study sample, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection techniques, data analysis, ethical issues, validity and reliability of the study

### 3.2 Research design

Creswell (2009) defined research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with the economy in procedure. In this study, grounded theory design as a strategy that can be used to generate and verify theory. This design begins with the broad descriptive interests and then, through data collection and analysis, moves to discover and verify relationships and principles (Charmaz, 2006). Qualitative approach was used to help the researcher gain much insight into the real life situations. In a grounded theory design, a researcher is solely interested in describing the situation or case under his/her research study. It is a theory-based research designs which is developed to gather, analyse and present collected data.

### 3.3 Study/Target population

According to Flick (2011) population is considered to be any group of people, events or things that are of interest to the researchers and that on which they wish to investigate. According to Babbie (2008), the population for a study is that group (usually people) about whom a researcher wants to draw conclusion for his study. Generally, studying the whole population to arrive at generalisation would be impossible. The target population for this study comprised the head teachers, deputy Head teachers, senior teachers, teachers teaching below Grade five and all pre-school teachers who were available and ten Grade two pupils in the respective schools. From each school two pupils were picked respectively. The pupils comprised the five Grade twos only who attended early childhood education and the other five who did not attend respectively.

### **3.4 Study sample**

In research it is not possible to complete a research project by meeting the entire population because of time and budgetary constraints. The study sample was very important because it gave the researcher a manageable number of respondents which was used to study the entire population. Hence, from the 42 total number of teachers, 24 participants were picked by virtue of having taught at lower primary section and having relevant knowledge concerning early childhood education. The sample comprised nine school administrators, three (3) head teachers, three (3) deputy heads, and three (3) senior teachers. Ten Grade 1-4 class teachers and 3 untrained and 2 trained pre-school teachers from all the five respective schools under the study.

### **3.5 Sampling techniques**

In order to answer the research questions the researcher should collect data from the participants. Thus, there is a need to select a sample. Since researchers neither have time nor the resources to analyse the entire population they apply sampling technique to reduce the number of cases. The main purpose of sampling was to pick the participants from the total population existing in the sample. Purposive sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of participants in order to provide important information which cannot be obtained from other choices (Babbie, 2008). It is where the researcher includes cases or participants in the sample because they believe that they warrant inclusion. The school staffs were chosen because of their environmental experiences that influenced them in schools, their knowledge of the traditional and contemporary pupils and their involvement in the exact cultural context where models of practice would be implemented by them. The schools were chosen for this study because they were implementing early childhood education since its inception in 2015. Education administrators in the selected schools were picked purposively by virtue of their positions so as to provide the answers to the researcher so that the research objectives are achieved. This approach is most applicable in small populations which are difficult to access due to their closed nature and inaccessible professions (Flick, 2011).

### **3.6 Data collection instruments**

The instruments used in collecting data were interview guides and tests. An interview guide is a list of questions a researcher uses to ask the participants during interviews. The school staff responded to interview guides and pupils answered literacy test questions. In this case it was a structured interview. The basis for the use of interview guide was to find out the expression and views of the participants about the early childhood education implementation. An interview guide acknowledges four important facts of human social interactions that influence what people are likely to say to the researcher. Interview guides help the researcher to know what to say about and in what sequence, how to pose the questions and how to pose the follow ups. Interview guides provide guidance about what to do or to say next, after a respondent has answered the last question (Kennedy, 2006). The tests administered were in three categories, namely working out simple mathematics questions, writing spellings and reading some words.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

Interview validity refers to whether interview questions map to specific competencies list. To ensure maximum validity, the researcher did one-to-one correspondence between interview questions asked and underlying competency. To ensure interviewer reliability, the interviewer used interview questions that were designed. Interview data was reliable, valid and consistent with the responses deemed essential for the interview. Interview guides were flexible. When the interview was highly structured and carried out by one person interview execution. The researcher found that the way that data was collected and evaluated also had a significant impact on the validity of the interview.

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. Test-retest reliability is a measure of reliability obtained by administering the same test twice over a period of time to a group of individuals. A test was designed to assess children learning in literacy and numeracy was given. The obtained results indicated the stability of the scores. The goals and objectives were clearly defined and operationalized. The tests were matched goals and objectives.

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

The research ethical clearance letter was gotten from Kwame Nkrumah University ethical committee, to permit the researcher to undertake the research, permission was sought from the District Education Board Secretary, the head teachers of the five selected schools to carry out the data collection and also explain to participants the purpose of the study. In addition, school administrators from the selected schools were consulted on the convenient venues for data collection so as to save time of the participants and travelling costs. All the stakeholders were informed well in advance about the study. The researcher personally conducted the interviews with all the participants. This was after the researcher had explained the purpose of the research and guidelines to the participants. The targeted staffs for the interviews were assured of confidentiality of the information they would give and encouraged to give fair and objective answers. Face-to-face interaction provided the platform for the researcher to clarify any possible challenge and also created the opportunity to interact with the people. The data collection and interviews was timely done in three weeks period.

### **3.9 Data analysis procedure**

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap and evaluate data (Andelchi and Bruno, 2012). The data was chosen on merit of interdependency of producing a standard language and framework to guide description. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics presented in pie charts and percentages. As the initial step in analysing the collected data for this study, the information gathered was organised according to the common features. The qualitative data that was collected by interviews was analysed thematically through three stages, namely assembling of the data in which a researcher put together all the data obtained in the field. Coding of the data in which the obtained data was refined and categorised into more logical themes that best explained the studied issue. Lastly, building of meanings marked the third stage in which meanings and interpretation were assigned to each category ready for a discussion and reporting the outcome of the study. Generally, the collected data was coded, sorted, grouped and identified so as to see the related parts that correspond to the research objectives and questions.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher was given a letter from Kwame Nkrumah University, (see appendix) which introduced him to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) for ethics adherence. The District Board Secretary gave a permit to the researcher to conduct the study in the selected primary schools in Lunte (see appendix). Each participant received a letter outlining the research purpose and a consent form for their record as well as the consent form which the researcher has kept. Furthermore, protection of participants' anonymity and confidentiality that information obtained should not be disclosed to any third parties or indeed be used for any other purpose other than academic work as initially intended was explained to the participants. The names of participants were not mentioned. Furthermore, the researcher explained and provided participants with the right to withdraw from participating in the study if need arose without being forced and that the researcher might withdraw and terminate the research owing to unforeseen circumstances.

Furthermore, participants were assured of full ethical principles: anonymity, beneficence, malfeasance, fidelity and confidentiality.

### **3.11 Summary of the chapter**

The chapter has presented the research methodology that was carried out in order to address the study objectives. The parameters were set so that any emerging changes different from the plan might be responded to by the objectives' specification. The chapter laid down the roadmap and focus of the later chapters of the study. Methodology in this study entailed the ethical manner in which the study was tailored and conducted in the five selected primary schools of Lunte District.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The findings are presented in relation to the three objectives stated in chapter one. The objectives were: *To find out the factors affecting the implementation of early childhood education; explore the benefits of early childhood education implementation in selected primary schools of Lunte District; and to develop possible practical measures of enhancing early childhood education implementation in selected primary schools of Lunte District.*

The research was conducted among the following: three head teachers, three deputy head teachers, three senior teachers, and ten primary school teachers teaching at lower primary section, and five pre-school teachers. This amounted to twenty-four participants.

**Table 4.1: Gender Representation of Participants from selected five schools**

Schools	Frequency		Percentage		Total average from both sexes in percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Lubushi	2	5	33.3	27.7	29.2
Mpalapata	1	4	16.7	22.2	20.8
Mulukuma	-	3	0	16.7	12.5
Pecha	1	2	16.7	11.1	12.5
Lunte	2	4	33.3	22.2	25
Total	6	18	100	100	100

(Source: Field Data 2019)

The participation from schools in both percentage and numerical value were calculated from the total of 24 for both sexes and 6 for males and 18 for females present from the five schools respectively. Lubushi primary was the highest representing staff (29.2%, 7), Mpalapata primary staff (20.8%, 5), Mulukuma primary staff (12.5%, 3), Pecha staff (12.5%, 3), and Lunte primary staff (25%, 6). This meant that (100%, 24) was the total percentage representation of all the teachers actively involved from the five primary schools.

Below is a table of participants' ages, age frequencies and percentages

**Table 4.2: Ages of Participants**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	2	8.3
26-31	4	16.7
32-36	4	16.7
37-42	9	37.5
43 and above	5	20.8
Total	24	100

(Field Source Data, 2020)

Table 4.2 above shows the ages of all the 24 participants involved. This revealed that there was a good number of staff who were experienced and matured as an ingredient that could influence the outcomes of the study findings in the best way possible. However, at times age cannot be an indicator of experience because age entry in employment differs. This data communicates the gravity and age variations that were involved and considered in order to avoid biased results. About 37.5 percent were between 37- 42 Years, 20.8 percent were above 43 years, about 16.7 percent were between 26-36 years and the lowest was 8.3 percent between 20-25 years.

**Table 4.3: Staff Experience**

Years in service	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5 years	2	8.3
6-10 years	7	29.2
11- 15 years	6	25
16 and above	9	37.5
Total	24	100

(Source: Field Source, 2020)

Table 4.3 shows the number of years participants had served in the primary sector. This shows that about 37.5 percent had more than 16 years in service, 25 percent had served between 11-15 years,

29.2 percent had served between 6-10 years and 8.3 had served less than 5 years. The number of years in service could mostly have influence on the study findings.

**Table 4.4: Qualifications of the Staff**

	Lubushi	Mpalapata	Mulukuma	Pecha	Lunte
<b>Grade 12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Certificate</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Diploma</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Degree</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Masters</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

(Source: Field source, 2020)

Table 4.4 shows the qualifications of the participants involved, which revealed that there were many diploma holders of 12, followed by 8 certificate holders, 2 trained and 3 untrained pre-school teachers and 1 degree holder. This was a fair structure in terms of teacher required qualification at primary school levels. Nevertheless, the three pre-school teachers were untrained and held Grade 12 certificates.

#### **4.2 Data collected by the interview guide from the school staff.**

Below is the sub theme presentation of the findings elicited and collected by the interview guide from the 24 school staff. The findings are aligned in response to the order of the three objectives.

##### **4.2.1 Risk factors affecting good implementation of early childhood education**

In response to the first objective on the challenges affecting the implementation of ECE, about 70.8 percent (17) of participants said that early childhood education received poor funding from the government and it had dilapidated and poorly designed infrastructure for early childhood education and 12.5 percent (3) mentioned lack of teacher in service training and lack of professional qualification. About 75 percent (18) of participants revealed that there was lack of inspection and supervision in district. The district inspectors did not visit schools regularly to inspect how ECE was implemented and 20.8 percent (5) said that shortage of teaching and learning materials was a challenge in the ECE implementation.

In response to question 4 on what challenges staff faced to effectively implement the ECE, one teacher stated that there were many reasons behind such happenings. About 83.3 percent (20) of the participants said geographical location and long distances from home to early childhood education center; about 70.8% (17) cited family instability in children homes, 83.3 percent (20) pointed out economic hardships, 100 percent (24) of participants said parental ignorance about early childhood education and limited education background 70.8 percent (17) and government inconsistency in its promises on ECE programs. The ECE program did not do well owing to lack of some standards in schools, inadequate staff in the field and government's lack of commitment to implement pronouncements.

On the other hand, some challenges were that cultural context did not embrace such programmes; poverty stricken societies and lack of community participation and self-empowerment also hindered full implementation and participation. The study then sought to find out how responsible the staff was in assisting ECD in the national policy of developing a child. The staff showed dedication that with the available human resource they did their utmost though they were limited in some scope that was beyond their bounds. They further stated that some communities started sensitisation campaigns on the challenges pertaining to child education in order to awaken the community. In order to probe in detail, individual staffs were asked to identify the challenges they foresee in child education. 63 percent (15) said poor funding; 83 percent (20) cited lack of infrastructure; 54 percent 13 mentioned that teachers felt inferior teaching under children under the age of hence they lost the drive to train in such a field; 75 percent (18) mentioned parental failure to meet their children needs and 89 percent (21) articulated that such programmes are tailored for well to do family in urban areas and not every community.

It was finally thought that administrators of the five schools could have different views regarding their role and positions in such schools. From the administrators, 1 head teacher said, "My school has no funds to run such programmes for it demands much." And another head teacher said, "The government is not reconsidering the negative impact it has put us on, pupils are using toilets which are not conducive and pupils has few learning hours due to the school infrastructure not being accommodative." And the last head teacher said, "The rural set up has more challenges economically because some grandparents are taking care of their grandchildren while they are not productive." And those children were said to have had either one parent or lost both parents.

Besides, table 4.5 below, shows the statistics of the challenges faced in line with ECE as was given out by teachers and head teachers by summary.

**Table 4.5: ECE General Risk factors spotted out**

Challenges	Frequencies	Percentage
Inadequate trained preschool personnel	7	29
No existing infrastructure for early childhood education	24	100
furniture inadequacy	20	83.3
Long distances for children going to school	17	70.8
Inactive community participation	13	54.2
Irregular funding from government	16	66.7
Community poverty	12	50
No recreational facility	17	70.8
No supervision	13	54.2
Poor sanitation	9	38
Lack of ECE program awareness	19	79.2

(Source: Field Data, 2020)

The percentages were arrived at by dividing the total number of teachers into the frequency and later multiplied by one hundred percent.

#### **4.3. Benefits of Early Childhood Education Implementation**

In order to explore the benefits of early childhood education implementation it was found that 100 percent agreed that it had positive effects. Since all participants recognised the importance of ECE, it raised keen interest to identify the benefits of early childhood education implementation, and the responses were as follows: early achievements in academic performance (75%, 18), early literacy rates (58.3%,14), love and appreciation of life (75%, 18), never become drop outs (62.5%, 15), high attendance to school (87.5%, 21) and morally grown (50%,12) as well as a solid foundation that cannot be compromised. In probing more of ECE benefits of child education on school performance, it was found that (95.8%, 23) said such pupils did not give problems to society for they are founded on educational concepts as compared to those who spend their first six years in societies full of bad happenings and (56%, 13) said majority of pupils who attended early

childhood education were great achievers in life. And (45.8%, 11) said everything has got a foundation unto which the wellspring is determined, and so a good foundation is key to success. These were the benefits of ECE program among children who attended it prior to primary education. Hence ECE provides a good foundation for the child's future achievement in life. The basis of the responses was to measure how knowledgeable and significant the staff was in implementing the government pronouncement and how ready they were. The ECE program has been in offer since 2015 but the importance behind has not been realised. The importance behind cannot be overemphasised. This program puts children in focus on sound education that every developed society cherishes for the current generation and posterity's appreciation.

The chart below shows the results of 6 different pupils who went to early childhood education and those who did not. The scores shown are for Grade two pupils detecting their progress in literacy test.

**Table 4.6: Grade 2 Literacy test scores.**

	Attended ECE					Did not attend ECE				
<b>Test 1 OUT OF 15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Test 2 OUT OF 15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Test 3 OUT OF 15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

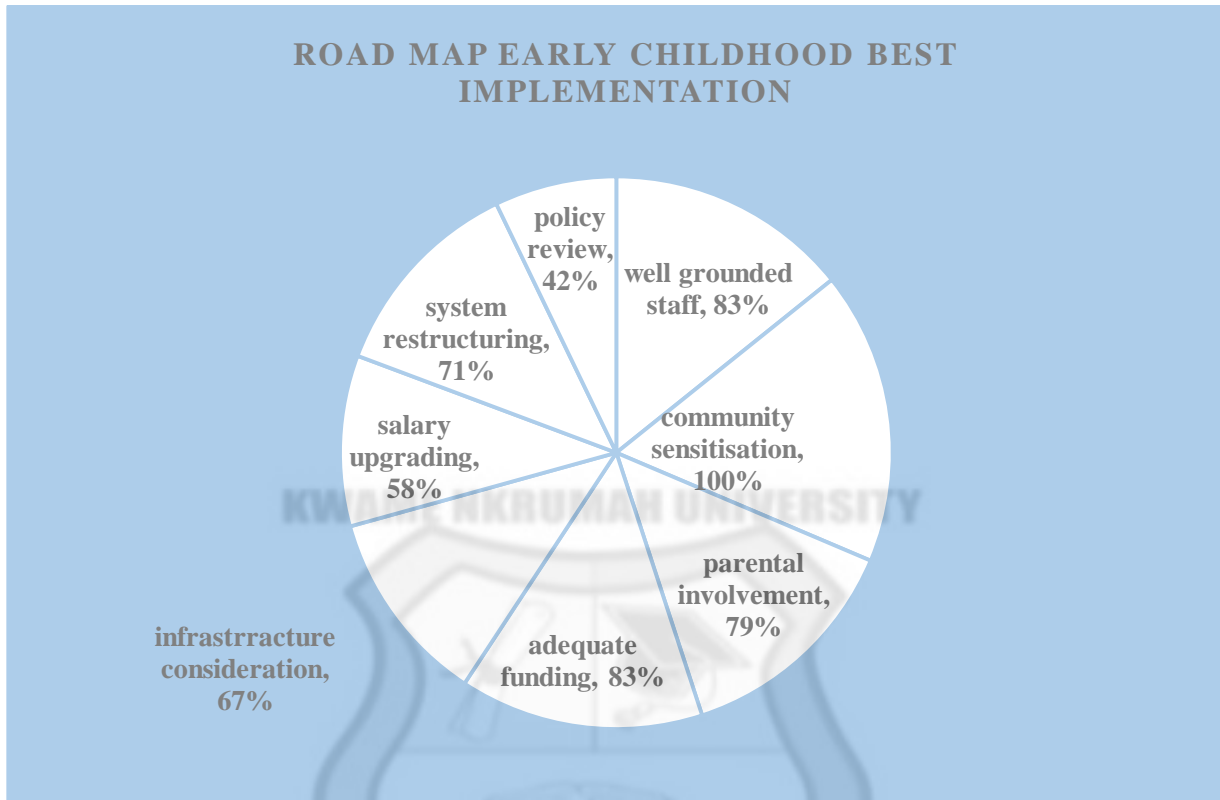
(Source: All the schools under study, 2019)

The table 4.6 shows the results of 10 Grade 2 pupils, who sat for the three tests of numeracy and literacy. The first test administered was in literacy reading. The next was literacy spellings and the last test was in numeracy. Five of the pupils attended early childhood education and five of them did not attend. The results revealed that the five pupils who attended early childhood education had higher marks than the five pupils who did not.

#### **4.4 Best Possible Means of ECE Implementation**

The questions from 10 to 12 from the interview guide with the 24 school staff were based on means the participants could currently employ to address best possible means to implement early childhood education.

**Figure 4.1: Best Ways to Implement ECE**



In trying to meet the research objective on the best possible means of early childhood Education implementation in the five selected primary schools in Lunte District, 83.3 percent(20) suggested better trained teachers as a remedy; 100 percent(24) suggested strengthening community sensitisation especially in rural areas; 79.2 percent(19) proposed more parental involvement in the education of their children; 83.3 percent(20) suggested government funding to be regular; 66.7 percent(16) suggested infrastructure expansion and modification of the current ones; 58.3 percent(14) suggested upgrading of the salary scale for those teaching lower sections; and 70.8 percent (17) restructuring of early childhood programme from national to local level representation.

To probe further the participants were asked how the above stated corrective measures could be carried out to meet child education expectation. The responses were as follows: to review, monitor and regularly evaluate current policies 41.7%, 10); to involve parents at best level in their children education and elicit their expectation (66.7%, 16); to employ more qualified guidance teachers

with child psychology (83.3% 20); and to regulate teachers' conduct based on their performance in order not to fail the ECE program as key implementers (62.5% 15). The schools should establish a business venture for self-sustenance of early childhood needs. The responses were; frequent media sensitisation (79.2%, 19); government should be in full support of school in terms of material (58.3% 14); improved infrastructure and human resource (66.7%, 16). In all the existing government colleges and universities, the government should introduce a section which will look at the ECE teacher training.

This can be seen diagrammatically in figure 4.1 above where the means of improving early childhood education implementation were overlapping and they were dependent scenarios which needed concerted efforts of everyone.

From the kind of support that the staff could offer in ensuring that the program is well effected, about 83.3 percent (20) said they could implement government policies at all cost within their limits; 66.7 percent (16) said they should sensitise the community on how well, in togetherness, they can educate their children from the ECE foundation and give reports to the stakeholders on the program progression for evaluation.

In response to how parental and other external stakeholder's involvement enhance effective implementation of ECE program in their schools, but all interviewed staff did not show signs that their communities responded as expected of them in ensuring that their children attend this education foundation program.

#### **4.5 Summary of the chapter**

The chapter has presented the findings of the research carried out on the three objectives with the aim of meeting the research purpose. The objectives were responded to depending on the data gathered from head teachers and teachers, and pupils to whom interviews and three tests were administered respectively. This was responding to the risk factors in the implementation of ECE, the benefits of ECE and the possible practical means that cannot be implemented in the five selected primary schools of Lunte district in Zambia. The data presented has not been changed in any form by the researcher.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### 5.1 Overview

Ineffective early childhood education implementation is one of the major current problems faced in all the selected primary schools of Lunte district. For example in chapter four, table 4.2 shows the challenges of early childhood education implementation. This chapter presents the interpretation and discussion of the findings depending on how issues were raised. In this respect, data analysis refers to the separation of elements of research data to expose some general principles that can be utilised to explain the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and can be applied in other contexts (Denscombe, 2003). Before interpreting results, the reader is challenged to recall the three main objectives of the research.

These were to: (a) *Identify the risk factors affecting the implementation of early childhood education in selected primary schools of Lunte district;* (b) *explore the benefits of early childhood education implementation in selected primary schools of Lunte district;* and (c) *establish possible practical measures, of enhancing early childhood education implementation in selected primary schools of Lunte district.*

### 5.2 Discussing Risk Factors Affecting the Implementation of Early Childhood Education.

From the findings, it is revealed that poor funding is a challenge in the implementation of early childhood education. No educational programme can reach its fruition, regardless of how excellent it may be, if there is inadequate funding. Early childhood education should be fully funded so that all the materials needed in the implementation of ECE are available. Educating our Future (1996) agrees that the government shall dedicate some of its resources so as to implement early childhood education. Poor funding of early childhood education programme was identified as a major challenge to early childhood education. Emphasis was made that to achieve success in any public service, the issue of finance/funding cannot be overlooked. Participants indicated that if education is poorly funded, it negatively affects the staffing, pupil- teacher ratio, the provision of infrastructure and the like, which would have a high negative effect on what is likely to be the quality of the output. This was the reason why many developed nations make provision for the

funding of the services for their pre-schools. The funding of this segment was given a prime place in the nations' budget (Educating Our Future, 1996). However, that has not been implemented.

The risk factors spotted out from teachers and head teachers were: Long distances from home to schools. Furthermore, some children entered preschool too young to travel long distances, and in most communities of the schools there were no means of transport to and from school. Besides, many parents were not able to provide all the needs their children are entitled to. Further, parents feared to subject their children to crossing rivers, mountainous roads, and thick forests. This contributed to irregular attendance of pupils in ECE five centers available in Lunte district schools.

Early childhood education required well-built recreation facilities as revealed in the research findings. This is so because this education programme is characterised with play and various outdoor activities.

The environmental set up of the schools under study being rural had some negative effects of how well preschool education could be appreciated. With this view, Deas (2008) postulates that there is a general overview that child behavior is as the result of a complex interplay of individual biological and genetic factors and environmental factors, which starts during fetal development and continuing throughout life. These factors go to make up these difficult situations, which influence children capacity to adjust. They constitute the origin of fatal flaws in pre-school education. It has been a problem on why some pupils perform extremely badly as compared to other peers, why they steal and why others do not, why some play truant, or why some set fires and damage property and so forth. Early childhood education as an old phenomenon of human civilisation, has at present become a generic phase to predict everything or anything ahead of a child's life from school and out to society impact gains.

According to the findings, the educational system in this rural district has been in such a state of permanent crisis that it has lost quality, efficiency and functionality from the time it was pronounced. Some of these challenges were: inadequate trained personnel of the preschool section. The preschool teachers are very important in the sense that they lay the foundation of children by means of child psychology that they have studied.

Participants revealed that the Early Childhood Education lacked supervision. No educational plan however excellent it may be can effectively be implemented if the school inspection and

supervision is ineffective. The issue of supervision was stated to be vital in the process of implementing early childhood care education in Lunte primary schools if success is to be attained. It was pointed out that an effective programme with adequate facilities would eventually fail if there is no inspection and supervision. With well supported relevant literature, Nwagbara (2003) and Ogunsaju (2006) have identified supervision as an indispensable management key of any organisation or organisational programme. This then meant that supervision should be regular and an integral part of early childhood education programmes so that the goals may be achieved. Supervision needs to be tailored towards constructive criticism and guidance so as to develop a sense of confidence and competence in teachers, thereby leading to improvement. In that way regular and appropriate supervision in early childhood care education would help in evaluating the programme as well as in decision-making processes (Sooter, 2013).

From the time the program was pronounced it was observed that education standard monitors did not visit rural and remote schools regularly. This made it so challenging to implement early childhood education effectively. Four respondents explained that it had taken some years since the inspectors from the province and the district visited the school to inspect the effective implementation of early childhood education. Kulbir (1996:287) agrees that the inspectors are the key figures in any reform of classroom practice.

Community participation was found to be so low. This meant those communities did not embrace and appreciate the programme. Since the school and the community cannot function in isolation, once such a situation exists it would mean a breakdown of the system such as the running of ECE school programmes.

Poor sanitation was reported as a challenge. There was no running water or just nearby water points in these rural schools. Many wells and boreholes were dysfunctional. As a result, the process of fetching water from far streams available was arduous. Besides, many of these water sources were unsanitary. Toilet facilities were also of poor standards owing to overcrowding of pupils. For instance, Lubushi had total number of 983 pupils against 8 toilets. This was a real challenge for young learners who needed abundant care and attention in physical cleanliness.

According to elicited responses, some teachers complained about unequal treatment on account of their qualifications, and available facilities at school. This resulted in poor early childhood implementation performance. Coupled with the foregoing teacher incompetency on the subject

content, poor and unfavorable school policies, and poor channels of communication and unnecessary discipline cases among teachers and pupils were attendant challenges. Teacher-pupil relationship has been cited to be the pioneer of programme failure for not being founded on educational backgrounds. With full backing of the mentioned preceding factors, the perception of Ndhlovu (2015) was marked crystal clear that indiscipline concerns include school organisations, school staff relationship, curriculum and teaching methods and peer group influences. These risk factors regulate the conducive climate that may or may not integrate education with character in the five selected primary schools of Lunte that were piloting the programme.

The communities in which children live were also said to be influential in the worst way possible on the development of the child education. The neighborhood is an important context because it is a place where a wide array of peer and other social interactions take place and where children have access to institutional resources.

Poverty stood out as the worst aspect that challenged ECE best practices. There were strong reasons to think that families and their economic circumstances in particular, influenced both parents' and children's education and behaviour. On the other hand, parents with a low standard of education may feel uncomfortable in interacting with teachers and school officials while expectations and aspirations for the future career of their children are very limited. Another variable related to the above is the family structure whereby several studies show that single-parent families and step-parent families have a significant effect on the child's behavior (Shoemaker, 2005). It was argued that because of the economic and financial burden a single-parent comes across, a single-parent has to work a full time job to cope with the expenses, as well as the psychological and physical responsibilities that come with family. As a result, this leaves little time for such a parent to attend to the child's needs and attention in education circles. The lack of economic and psychological support that the single parent goes through is believed to have an unhealthy relationship with their children and less time to help them.

### **5.3 Discussing Benefits of Early Childhood Education and Academic Performance**

The research findings have clearly shown that early childhood education has huge benefits in the child's future success and the society at large. The benefits were; early literacy achievement. For example, in chapter four, table 4.1 shows the scores for pupils who attended early childhood

education and those who did not attend. There was clear evidence that early childhood education plays a very big role in the success of a child. Pupils who did not attend early child education did not perform well in the literacy test .This was an indication that investing in early childhood education brings about human resource development of the nation.

In addition the findings have shown that early childhood education is the foundation level for the smooth transition from the home setup into the education which helps to build the strong and firm foundation for the success of the child and the nation at large. When a child develops his or her potentials at a tender age it gives the child confidence to overcome challenges ahead. Early education undoubtedly put their lives and the well-being of schools at great heights. The end result is that majority of them perform well at other Grades in the transition process. Educating our Future (1996) explains that early childhood education develops the child's potential in life.

In relation to the findings, early childhood education enables children to grow up in a morally upright way. Other attributes were that ECE inculcated social norms and cultural values in the child. ECE was designed to inculcate in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys and so on. The other was to develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit. ECE was meant to teach children good habits, and the relevancy of numbers, letters, colors, shapes, and forms and so on through play. Education is one of the main fundamental rights for the child's development and also for national human resource development.

This is so because children spend most of their times at school socialising with friends hence developing the passion, sympathy and other personal values like sharing, loving and togetherness.

The research findings have revealed that early childhood education promotes early academic performance. This is true because children develop and understand the importance of education as they are always exposed to reading and writing. Hence children never become dropouts in school later. That was generally related to the following according to the findings: 1. Promote a smooth transition from home to school. 2. Prepare the child for the primary level of education. 3. Provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farm, in the market or offices). 4. There is a critique that unlike other research carried out in this area, the study did not find a significant difference between early childhood education and academic performance.

Cohen (2005) says “*We did not examine the possibility of a reciprocal relationship between academic outcomes and early education.*”

Children benefit a lot in early childhood education, they develop good habits, have daily routines, they feel safe and secure. They develop literacy and numeracy skills. They develop emotional resilience and enjoy a successful future. They also develop a lifelong love of learning. Early Childhood Education (ECE) leads to fewer students being placed in Special Education in their primary years. By meeting a child's needs early in life, it can help them to better learn and retain the foundational skills and knowledge to help them succeed in future. Pre-school advantages include a consistent structure and routine, and a focus on early education (which can inspire a love of learning). Most programs teach children a variety of cognitive, social, emotional, and language skills (Carmody, 2004).

The descriptive approach was used to qualify data gathered from the interview guide on the association of early childhood education with achievement in future. In supporting and bonding the comparison, frequent absence from school, incomplete homework, expulsion, suspension, late coming and punishments were cited in relation to those who experienced low academic achievements and did not attend pre-school because their love for education did not commence early. School staff presented all possible school related risk factors for school failure that even failure to attend pre-school education was a vice. Other gains cited were: reduction in the rates of special education placement; better class retention and lower attrition rates; reduction of public expenditure on the criminal justice system because the crime rates are reduced while children are juveniles; as well as many more benefits.

#### **5.4 Discussing Possible Means of Implementing Early Childhood Education.**

This section focuses on the possible practical means of implementing quality early childhood education, with an emphasis on rural children. Children deserve to have a good start or an effective foundation in life. Their early experiences in the homes, in the neighborhood, in child care, and in early education programmes affect how successful they will be later in life. The findings of this research has shown that provision of quality early childhood education service delivery promotes personal development .The earliest years of a child’s life are key to success in school life.

In relation to possible practical means of implementing early childhood education in Lunte district, the research findings have revealed that there is need for policy review. The early childhood curriculum should be reviewed so that it can address the needs of the rural children so as to prepare the children for future success. The curriculum should be localised so that the real issues affecting rural children can be addressed.

The findings have revealed that teachers of early childhood were demotivated by poor conditions of service. They should be given good salaries according to their qualification. Early childhood teachers who have upgraded their studies should be put in the correct salary scales. This would help ECE teachers not to divert when they acquire further studies. Therefore, early childhood teachers would be retained.

As reviewed in the research findings the community must be fully involved in the implementation of early childhood education. This would help parents and teachers to work in collaboration. The effective collaboration between the parents and the school would enable the early childhood centre to plan and develop a business venture which can help ECE to have self-sustenance. For example, a school can have a farm so as to enhance production unit such as cattle, pig and goat rearing, fish farming, and gardening. This would help the ECE centre to attain self-sustenance.

Furthermore, regarding teachers' and head teachers' suggestion on how possible the program can be done, the ministry of general education should consider restructuring the ECE sector from the national level up to the school level in a bottom up model for effective communication. Furthermore, early childhood sector should have a specialised directorate and inspectors who are trained in the field of ECE so that there is proper understanding of the early childhood education. Training of more early childhood inspectors and directors who understand the pedagogies of early childhood education. The education inspectors should be conduct regular inspection and monitoring to ensure minimum standards for early childcare centres in the country: ensuring full participation of government and other stake holders, communities and teachers' associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities. The ministry should consider having specialist teachers who are trained with the relevant knowledge and methodologies of early childhood education.

The presentation of the findings revealed that there is need to have well-grounded teachers with reasonable standards of expected behaviour in the community. Discipline among teachers is very

important in the effective implementation of any education programme. Teacher's behaviour should be exemplary in society. Early childhood education teachers should have good personal appearance such as dressing and cleanliness so as to enable the community to have confidence in the teacher who has been entrusted with the role of caring for the children.

About 18 out of the 24 staff suggested that there is potential for media to be used as a positive force in young people's lives. Some participants suggested that media use should balance the varied roles of information, education and entertainment by having less focus on sensationalism and the highlighting of negative influences through music and the print media. The media entities should forge meaningful relationships with all of the other agencies so that there could be greater facilitation of outreach efforts between other agencies and the youth giving them a chance to be seen as both current and future assets in society.

About 14 out of 24 staff reported that effective parenting, nurturing, supportive parenting which includes clear and consistent discipline that can prevent negative behaviors and also promote pro-social behaviors and values. Families vary, for example, in the extent to which they encourage and support education, monitor and manage peer activities, and so forth.

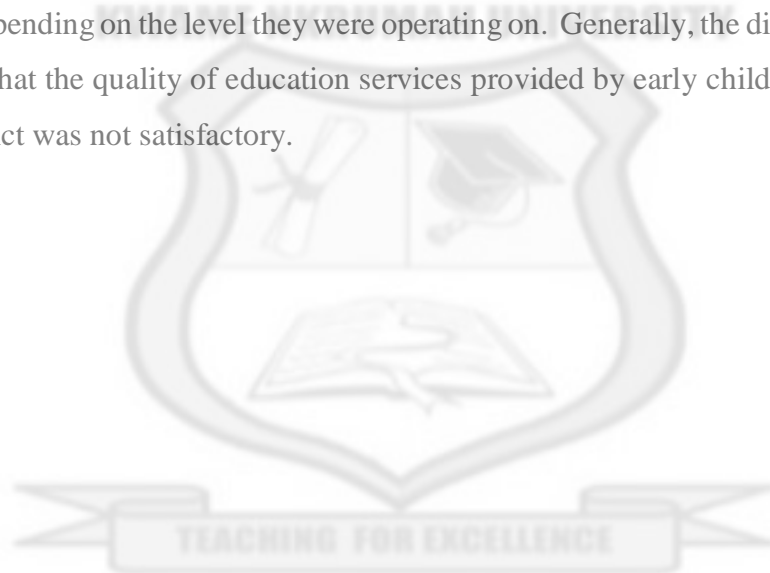
According to some staffs, the decisions made were to specify roles of schools and teachers, because these two play an important role in the topic by giving training to teachers about how to create a friendly and helpful environment. Unfortunately, children are not involved in this type of activity as they should be leading roles of themselves. In response to this there was a pledge that government would expand and diversify school infrastructure to increase learning opportunity and reduce competition for the limited places at all Grade levels and in institutions of higher learning (Zambian daily mail, minister of education, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016). This was based on the findings accompanied by other related suggestions.

It was found that parents and family are the first people that pupils get to know more on the earth and what these parents teach them or expose them to be what pupils think is the best for them. According to some participants, if the environment provided by these parents is wonderful, then there is hope of providing posterity with assets that they would sustain. The research's dealings with the participants clearly showed that parents should be meeting their teachers regularly, giving support to their children by sending them to early child education centres. Parents should not

compare their children to their age group, but consistently keep track of who their children are in touch with in order to scrutinise their scope and thirsty for knowledge because the mind of a child is ever thirsty for knowledge.

### **5.5 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter presented the discussion of the findings of the study. . The discussions were that some risk factors had made it impossible for the ECE programme to reach fruition. All the participants affirmed the benefits of ECE as was evaluated from the tests administered in which pupils who had attended this programme did better at Grade Two level than those who had not. Later the issue of how possible the programme could be done was to call for all stakeholders' involvement to participate depending on the level they were operating on. Generally, the discussion of the findings has revealed that the quality of education services provided by early childhood education centres in Lunte district was not satisfactory.



## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Overview

From the reflection of past and present literature available, with the supplement of this study it was worth concluding and recommending some practical actions in order to render the ECE programme useful and appreciated in the five selected primary schools of Lunte District. The study brings to light that early childhood education programme in the locality of the study was a challenge stemmed from a number of factors. The risk factors were poor funding, poor school sanitation, and long distances from home to schools, lack of program supervision, rural set up natural challenges as compared to urban areas, no existing infrastructure, few qualified personnel and community poverty.

### 6.2 Conclusions

The importance of a solid foundation in education cannot be overemphasised. Early childhood education is where the foundation of children education is laid. Performance at the other levels of academic can be traced or attributed to this foundation level. So a thorough knowledge of what and how education is being handled at this level is essential. Children in Lunte District, like any other in Zambia deserve quality early childhood education. Quality early childhood education is the only legacy that can be given to the children so as to set them on the road map to the reliable human resource that could propel economic development of nations. Thus the scope of the study has been brought this far to the recommendations listed below.

### 6.3 Recommendations

In order to improve early childhood education implementation in the selected primary schools of Lunte District, the following practical possible recommendations are shortlisted to ensure quality early childhood education:

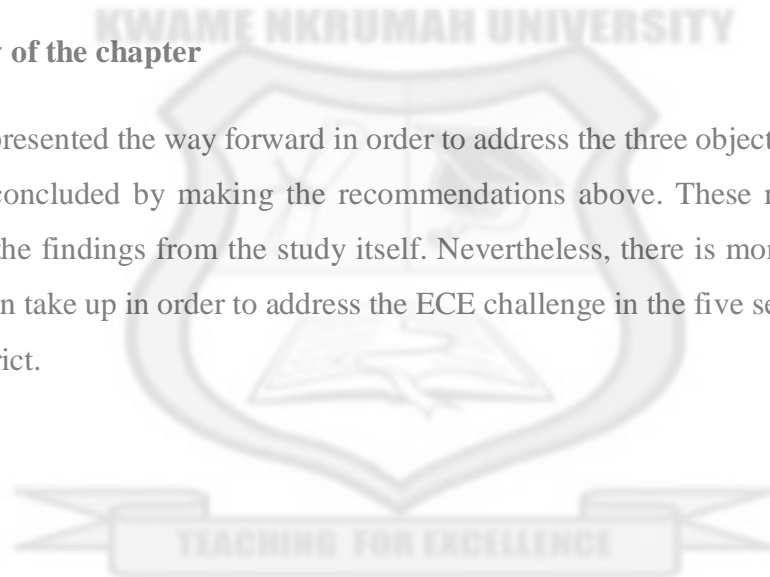
1. The government should make ECE universal in schools, and train highly qualified teachers for the programme.
2. All stakeholders should keep close and be familiar with the psychology of the children's way of learning so that they provide them an age appropriate experience for the satisfaction

of their basic needs and urges i.e. their interest, motives, aptitude, attitudes, potentials and others.

3. Government should adequately fund the early childhood education sector.
4. The community and the schools implementing early childhood education should work in collaboration and develop business ventures that will help ECE centres to attain self-sustenance.
5. Community participation should be the way to sustain local demands as self-driven in early childhood education in the principalities of community based rehabilitation. Meaning communities should work together to effect the ECE programme owing to the austerity measures the Zambian government has put in place.

#### **6.4 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter presented the way forward in order to address the three objectives set in chapter two. The chapter concluded by making the recommendations above. These recommendations were made basing the findings from the study itself. Nevertheless, there is more above this that other researchers can take up in order to address the ECE challenge in the five selected primary schools of Lunte District.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Interview Guide for Selected School Staff

Dear participants,

I am a second year postgraduate student of Kwame Nkrumah University, conducting a research on the risk factors of the implementation of ECE in primary schools. You have been purposively picked to participate in the study so as to help me gather information for my postgraduate programme by completing the interview sheets. The information which you will give shall be treated with strict confidentiality. This information shall only be used for academic purpose. No name should be written.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENT

Tick in the space provided [ ] for your appropriate response(s) and specify if stated.

##### (a) PERSONAL DETAILS.

1. Gender      Male [ ]      Female [ ]
2. Qualifications: certificate{ }      diploma { } degree{ }      masters { }
3. Age 20-25 [ ]      26-31[ ]      32- 37 [ ]      37-42 [ ] 43 and above [ ].

#### Challenges in the implementation of early childhood education

1. What challenges do you experience in then effective implementation of the ECE curriculum in your school?
2. May you comment on the adequacy and availability of infrastructure and learning materials for the 3-6 years old in your school?
3. What internal and external factors affect effective implementation of the ECE curriculum in your school?
4. How do you as a school get challenged to effectively implement the ECE pronouncement in supporting developing the whole child?
5. What preparations did the school put in place before the commencement of early childhood education programme?

6. What other problems not mentioned in the above five questions do you face?

**The benefits of early childhood education**

7. Does early childhood education play a role in later life of a child?

8. What quality and instructional indicators do you use to measure effectiveness of implementation strategies of the ECE syllabus in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

9. State further benefits of early childhood education implementation

10. What are the advantages of children attending early childhood education?

**Best possible means of early childhood education implementation**

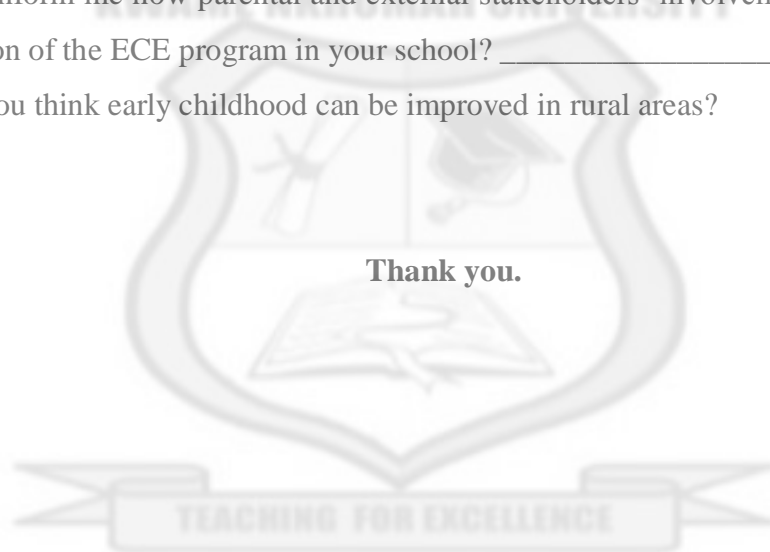
11. How can you improve early child education programmes as opposed to the current ones?

12. What kind of support would you give as the school?

13. Can you inform me how parental and external stakeholders' involvements enhance effective implementation of the ECE program in your school? \_\_\_\_\_ .

14. How do you think early childhood can be improved in rural areas?

**Thank you.**



## GRADE TWO TEST FOR LITERACY READING. TEST 1

**INSTRUCTIONS;** Read the following Bemba sentences.

- (1) . Kalaba Mona Mutale alelila.
- (2) . We mulumendo fukama.
- (3) . Bamaama naba mayo nabasenda imitoondo.
- (4) . Umwana alitemwa ukunwa umukaka.
- (5) . Inama shampaanga tashakwata bakushisunga.
- (6) . Nganasambilila nkaba namutekenya wandeke.
- (7) . Ubumi bwa muntu bwaba mumulopa.
- (8) . Finshi fili mucibokoshi?
- (9) . Umuntu onse mwisamba lya caalo, alikwata insambu shakusambilila.
- (10).Umumana wa Zambezi emumana wakulisha pamimana yonse mu caalo ca Zambia.
- (11).Bakafundisha nabakwata ifitabo kuminwe.
- (12).Tacawama ukwangala nangu ukuteya umupila mumusebo.
- (13).Ubuteko bwa caalo ca Zambia bwaliposako amano ku masambililo ya baana.
- (14).Kalaba Na Mutale bafukama elyo batampa ukupepa.
- (15).Bataata Bali naba yama mwibala lya mataba.

## GRADE TWO TEST FOR LITERACY SPELLINGS. TEST 2

**INSTRUCTIONS;** Write the following Bemba spellings.

- (1).Umukashana.
- (2).Insolokoto.
- (3).Umukolamfula.
- (4).Inkalamu.
- (5).Mulwelele.
- (6).Kafundisha mukalamba.
- (7).Ukukwesana.
- (8).Abalumendo.
- (9).Bashikulu Mutale.
- (10).Ukusekelela.
- (11).Kwiindi.
- (12).Amasambililo.
- (13).Icishibisho.
- (14).Itebulo.
- (15).Umumana.



### GRADE TWO TEST FOR NUMERACY. TEST 3

**INSTRUCTIONS;** Answer the following questions.

(1).  $12+12=$

(2).  $9+20=$

(3).  $15+20=$

(4).  $11+14=$

(5).  $22+10=$

(6).  $25+10=$

(7).  $17+11=$

(8).  $33-20=$

(9).  $14-8=$

(10).  $36-24=$

(11).  $15-15=$

(12).  $18-9=$

(13).  $16-11=$

(14).  $23-13=$

(15).  $19-12=$



## Appendix II: Introductory Letters



*Antal*  
*DS*

**KWAME NKURUMAH UNIVERSITY**

**DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

P. O. BOX 80404, KABWE, ZAMBIA  
Website: [www.nkrumah.edu.zm](http://www.nkrumah.edu.zm)  
PHONE: 0977897325/0987507131  
TEL/FAX: 021 5-223223

April 2, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Introduction letter: Glastone Chola (Students No. 1201700036)**

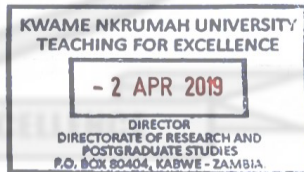
This serves to introduce the above named as a bona fide student of Kwame Nkrumah University in Kabwe. He is a Postgraduate Student in the school of Education and pursuing a **Masters Degree** in **Sociology of Educational**. Mr. Chola is working on the topic "**Factors Affecting the Implementation of Early Childhood Education in Lunte District, Northern Province - Zambia**" in his research, which is a partial fulfillment of the Master of Education Degree requirements for graduation. As part of his research, he will need to collect information regarding his subject of interest from **institutions such as yours**, as well as from general members of the public. He has chosen to visit your institution for that purposes. The data he will gather will strictly and purely be used for academic purposes only, i.e. to enable him write a research paper that will culminate in a Master's dissertation which will be submitted to the university upon completion.

Any favourable assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Hachintu Joseph (PhD)  
**Director: Research & Postgraduate Studies**



All communication should be addressed to

QUOTE THE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY  
Email:luntedeb@yahoo.com



In reply please quote

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
**MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION**

LUNTE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 410523,  
LUNTE.  
10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019

Dear Chola Glastone,

REF; PERMISSION GRANTED TO MR CHOLA GLASTONE TS NUMER =136432.

Am pleased to inform you that, your request to conduct a research project in the selected five primary schools of Lunte district has been granted. The district education office is wishing you all the best as you will be conducting the research project.

Yours faithfully

  
MBALE GEOFFREY  
DEBS

